Amendments to the Claims:

These claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a receiver, comprising:

energizing the receiver;

detecting the presence of a carrier signal, such that the receiver is de-energized substantially immediately without waiting for expiration of any time period if the presence of the carrier signal is not detected;

demodulating the detected carrier signal;

assessing the quality of the demodulated signal, such that the receiver is de-energized if the quality of the demodulated signal is not acceptable; and

decoding the demodulated signal if the signal quality is acceptable.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized by measuring the received signal strength indication (RSSI) as a means for detecting the presence of the carrier signal.

3. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized by measuring signal quality as a measure for determining if a signal is decodable.

4. (Previously Presented) A communications system comprising a primary station having a transmitter for transmitting a signal and at least one secondary station having a receiver for receiving signals from the primary station, the receiver comprising signal receiving means, means for detecting the presence of a received signal, means for detecting the quality of the received signal and power control means for de-energising the receiver substantially immediately

without waiting for expiration of any time period if the presence of a signal is not detected and the detected signal is not decodable.

5. (Original) A system as claimed in claim 4, characterised in that means for determining the received signal strength indication (RSSI) is coupled to the signal receiving means.

Claims 6 and 7 (Cancelled)

8. (Previously Presented) A battery-powered radio, comprising:

a receiver circuit, the receiver circuit operable to produce a received signal from a channel;

a received signal strength indicator circuit coupled to the receiver circuit, the received signal strength indicator circuit operable to produce an output indicating an amount of power in the channel;

a demodulator circuit coupled to the receiver circuit, the demodulator operable to produce a demodulated signal from the received signal;

a signal quality indicator coupled to the demodulator circuit;

a decoder circuit coupled to the demodulator circuit; and

a microprocessor coupled to the receiver, the received signal strength indicator circuit, the signal quality indicator circuit and the decoder circuit;

wherein the microprocessor is operable to energize and de-energize the receiver circuit; determine the presence of a carrier with a carrier detect false rate, based, at least in part, on the power of the channel, and to determine an acceptable signal quality with a signal quality false rate, based, at least in part, on an output of the signal quality indicator circuit;

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wherein the microprocessor is operable to energize the receiver circuit for a first period of

time, and, if the carrier is determined to be present, to then maintain the receiver in the energized

state until a determination is made as to whether acceptable signal quality has been obtained, and

to de-energise the receiver substantially immediately without waiting for expiration of any time

period if the carrier is determined to be present and the signal quality is not acceptable

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) The batter-powered radio of Claim 8, wherein the microprocessor is

operable to de-energize the receiver circuit if the carrier is determined to not be present, without

performing a signal quality determination.

11. (Previously Presented) The battery-powered radio of Claim 10, further comprising:

    a metering unit coupled to the microprocessor;

    an encoder circuit coupled to the microprocessor; and

    a radio transmitter circuit coupled to the encoder circuit.